I. INTRODUCTION

This document reports data recovery excavations at the Neuse Levee site (31WA1137), a National Register–eligible archaeological site located near Wake Crossroads in northern Wake County, North Carolina. The site was to be impacted by the proposed dualization of US 401 by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Because of expected impacts to the site, the project was under review by the Office of State Archaeology (OSA). Due to the nature of the planned construction, which involved paralleling the existing Neuse River bridge with an additional two-lane bridge, avoidance and preservation in place were not feasible alternatives. Consequently, a mitigation plan was developed by NCDOT that included a research design for data recovery excavations. The implementation of this research design recovered data relevant to a wide range of research questions, and resulted in the mitigation of adverse impacts to the significant archaeological resources at the site.

The study was undertaken to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (PL 89-665) as amended, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL 91-190), the Advisory Council's Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties (36 CFR Part 800), the North Carolina State Environmental Policy Act of 1971 (G.S. 113A), and North Carolina State Executive Order XVI of 1971. The study complies with the Society of Professional Archaeologists' *Standards of Research Performance,* and was conducted in conformance with the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports of Archaeological Surveys and Evaluations, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office,* 1982, and with the *Draft Addenda to Guidelines for Preparation of Archaeological Survey Reports, NC Office of State Archaeology,* May 1989.

The Neuse Levee project was viewed as part of a larger study of the Neuse Fall Line region. The research design is the outgrowth of several cultural resource management projects conducted by the senior author below the Falls of the Neuse. An effort was made to overview these and other projects conducted in the region and to collect a consistent data set across sites. The studies were oriented toward studying the landscape evolution of the region in terms of utilization of topography and soils. A review of the projects in the area is provided in the "Previous Archaeological Projects" section of Chapter 3.

The Neuse Levee project area lies on the east or downstream side of the existing US 401 Neuse River Bridge in northeastern Wake County, North Carolina (Figure 1.1) (see NCDOT 1998a). The location is on the north bank of the Neuse River. The Phase I investigations were conducted during 1992 by Maher (1992a, 1992b), and included intensive survey of the bridge crossing. Site testing was undertaken by Glover (1993) in 1993. He found that the site was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) because it was an intact Archaic site with the potential to correct some of the misinterpretations of regional Archaic site types and distribution due to their infrequent appearance in floodplain environments. Results of the Phase I and II excavation suggested that 31WA1137 was largely an Archaic, specifically a Middle Archaic, site. However, evaluation of the larger tool assemblage recovered in Phase III and dating of the site indicated that the occupations took place during and after the Late Archaic. Much of the thinking of this report was therefore focused on the phenomenon of the Archaic-to-Woodland transition.

This report is organized in the following manner. Chapter 2 contains information on the environment of the region, and Chapter 3 provides background information on the prehistory and history of the region as well as on previous archaeological investigations in the project vicinity. Chapter 4 discusses the research design and Chapter 5 the research methods. Chapter 6 details the results of site excavations. Chapters 7–11 discuss analytical results by various consultants and staff members. Chapter 12 completes the report with summary and conclusions. The Appendices include the artifact catalog (1), geological observations (2), geochemical results (3), ceramic data (4), lithic data (5), phytolith analysis (6), and resumes (7).

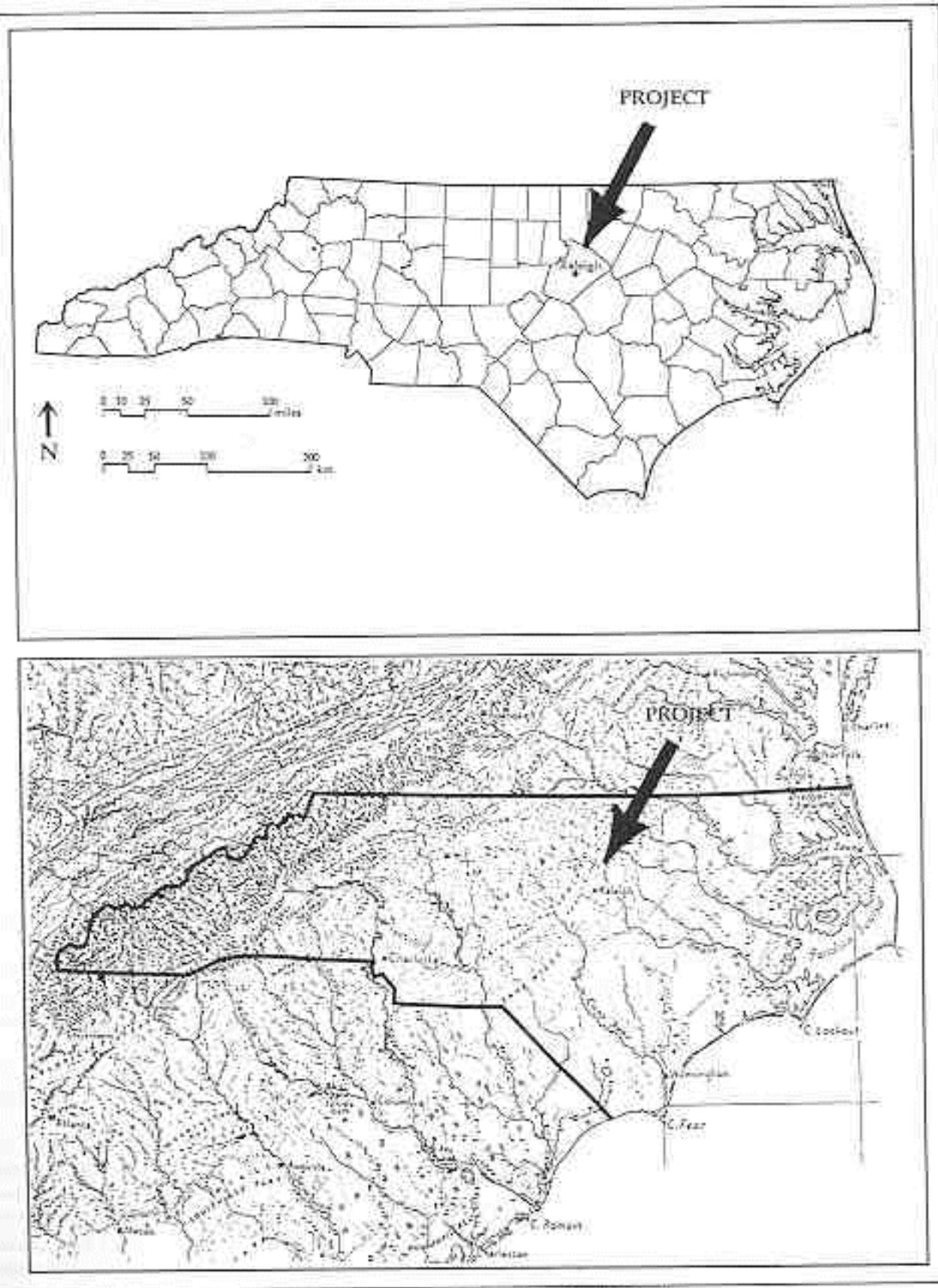

Figure 1.1. Location and Physiography of the Project Area in North Carolina.